

CLAIMS

1. A graphics processing apparatus comprising:
  - an input mechanism;
  - 5 a control mechanism configured to receive one or more items of data from said input mechanism;
  - one or more pipelines configured to receive said items of data as instructed by said control mechanism; and
  - 10 one or more graphics processing units coupled to said pipelines configured to perform one or more computations on said items of data.
2. The graphics processing apparatus of claim 1 wherein said control mechanism is a mode bit.
- 15 3. The graphics processing apparatus of claim 1 wherein said items of data comprise pixels.
4. The graphics processing apparatus of claim 1 wherein said control mechanism is configured to use all of said pipelines, thereby simulating a high-end chip.
- 20 5. The graphics processing apparatus of claim 1 wherein said control mechanism is configured to use a subset of said pipelines, thereby simulating a low-end chip.

6. The graphics processing apparatus of claim 1 wherein said graphics processing unit comprises:

a raster color unit, a texture address unit, and a scan unit coupled to one of said pipelines;

5 a pixel shader coupled to said texture address unit and said raster color unit; and  
a frame buffer coupled to said pixel shader, wherein said graphics processing unit is configured to process one or more pixels.

7. A method for selectively configuring a graphics processing apparatus  
10 comprising:

using an input mechanism to provide one or more items of data to one or more pipelines;

routing said items of data to some or all of said pipelines with a control mechanism;  
and

15 operating on said items of data in one or more graphics processing units coupled to said pipelines.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said control mechanism is a mode bit.

20 9. The method of claim 7 wherein said items of data comprise pixels.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein said control mechanism is configured to use all of said pipelines, thereby simulating a high-end chip.

11. The method of claim 7 wherein said control mechanism is configured to use a subset of said pipelines, thereby simulating a low-end chip.

5 12. The method of claim 7 wherein said graphics processing unit comprises:

a raster color unit, a texture address unit, and a scan unit coupled to one of said pipelines;

a pixel shader coupled to said texture address unit and said raster color unit; and

a frame buffer coupled to said pixel shader, wherein said graphics processing unit is

10 configured to process one or more pixels.

13. A computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein configured to selectively configure a graphics processing apparatus, said computer program product comprising:

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to use an input mechanism to provide one or more items of data to one or more pipelines;

15 computer readable code configured to cause a computer to route said items of data to some or all of said pipelines with a control mechanism; and

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to operate on said items of data in one or more graphics processing units coupled to said pipelines.

14. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said control mechanism is  
a mode bit.

15. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said items of data  
5 comprise pixels.

16. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said control mechanism is  
configured to use all of said pipelines, thereby simulating a high-end chip.

10 17. The computer program product method of claim 13 wherein said control  
mechanism is configured to use a subset of said pipelines, thereby simulating a low-end chip.

18. The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said graphics processing  
unit comprises:

15 a raster color unit, a texture address unit, and a scan unit coupled to one of said  
pipelines;

a pixel shader coupled to said texture address unit and said raster color unit; and  
a frame buffer coupled to said pixel shader, wherein said graphics processing unit is  
configured to process one or more pixels.

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19. A method of producing a processing apparatus comprising:  
producing a processing apparatus having a full set of features;

including in said processing apparatus a mechanism for disabling a subset of said full set of features.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein a processing apparatus having said full set of features enabled is distributed for a first price and a processing apparatus having said subset of said full set of features disabled is distributed for a second price.

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21. The method of claim 20 wherein said first price is higher than said second price.

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22. The method of claim 19 wherein said mechanism permanently disables said subset of said full set of features.

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23. The method of claim 19 further including a plurality of mechanisms for disabling a plurality of subsets of features of said full set of features.